



CHAPTER X.
A RETURN HOME.

All told, there were about fifteen hundred people on the Cotton Queen that night. They were of all sorts and conditions. There were planters and their families returning from an early visit to the north; speculators by the score who had been up to Memphis and beyond to look over the crop; some, like myself, from the north, going down the river upon errands of business or pleasure; not a few sporting men, who frequented the bar, talked loud and smoked long cigars, and there was a Virginian taking thirty slaves of both sexes to New Orleans for sale. I had seen something already of the grand scale upon which the large river boats were constructed; but the magnificence of this one amazed me. Everything in the way of gilding, decorating and furnishing that could be done was there, regardless of expense. Tall mirrors in the saloons and cabins multiplied the crowd. Carpets of gorgeous pattern and the first texture were under foot. Profusion and variety of viands were at the crowded tables at mealtimes. I walked about and mingled with the passengers, hearing much talk of the immense cotton

but a single motion, he drew a revolver, cocked it and pointed it at the other's head. The crowd fell back in fright; some were thrown down and trampled under foot, some were carried back against the wall, and many who could find no room from the room. The two gamblers sat motionless.

"You wouldn't send a man out of the world this way?" the one who was threatened by the pistol said.

"I ought to, you cheating scoundrel! Sir, to a bystander, 'just look at this set of diamonds,' that he played last. Now look at the trumps he's played there, and see if there ain't another of 'em."

The man addressed ran over the cards, and quietly threw out another. "I thought so," I thought I was cheated, an hour back, but I couldn't lay my finger on the spot till this minute. I'm going to take every dollar of that money, Dan Turner, take it in."

The revolver still covered Conrad Bostock's head. The companion of the man who held it proceeded to stuff his pockets with great handfuls of the gold and notes on the table until not a dollar remained.

"Now, I've done with you, my miserable, clumsy cheat," the man with the revolver said. "You ought to be lynched. You're a disgrace to the company of all gentlemen; but—"

"Lynch him! Throw him into the river! Drown him! The him fast to a nigger!" came a shower of suggestions from the crowd.

The object of their attentions turned pale. I had marvelled to see his composure when the muzzle of the revolver was at his forehead; but he doubtless was thoroughly acquainted with his own class, and knew that there was no danger of more than a menace from that quarter, provided he sat still and made no resistance. But when those hostile cries were heard, he realized his danger at once. He was among gamblers, sporting men, speculators and adventurers; many of them had been drinking freely; his offense was something each man, by reason of his own mode of life, was prepared to regard as a personal insult and injury. And he probably knew, too, that no wild beast of the forest or of the wild is so cruel in its rage as a crowd of men.

No time was allowed him to think about it. A yell was made for him; a dozen hands seized him, spite of his struggles, cries and curses, he was dragged along toward the gangway.

The captain came running down, hearing the commotion; and, seeing the situation of affairs, began to intercede for the endangered man.

"For God's sake, gentlemen, what's the matter? Don't have any violence here!"

"It's only a—card-sharp we're going to give a ducking."

"It's about time we made an example of some of these blacklegs who travel along the river, fleecing honest gentlemen."

He heard me, and the mist seemed dispelled from his brain; as by magic. A look of surprised intelligence came to his face.

"You Dorr Jewett?—little Dorr? Bless me, how you have grown! I'm not often glad to see anyone but my child, in these days; but I am glad to see you. Is your father well?"

"Why, he died, sir, more than a year ago. I wrote to you about it."

"I never read letters now—nor papers—nor books. Not now. Yet I do remember a nice letter you wrote me once, years ago, before."

The change that came over that woe-filled face terrified me. It was literally black with rage, with fury, called up by his own speech.

"Yes, sir," I hastened to say, "and you answered it so kindly."

"Did I? That is well; I am glad to hear it. So you've come to look up a wretched and lonely old man like me, have you, because I was kind to you? Do you know, my boy, I don't think there's another man in Louisiana, or out of it, could soften me the way you have. I'm going to have you stay here, now you've come. Oh, yes, I do remember now all about the time I went to Boston, and back among the hills where I was born, and how I found you and your poor Amos out in the fields, and ate your good mother's mush and milk."

His face seemed recreated. It actually was a gentle smile.

"But it was long ago, and life has been hard and cruel with me since, and I have forgotten all these pleasant things. Why, boy, it seems to me as if you'd come to me from another world."

He took my hand in his own thin hand.

"You'll stay with me, Dorr Jewett, won't you?"

I believe the tears came to my eyes at the question. It was asked in a voice which was the ghost of that hearty, resonant tone that had long sounded in my dreams. I told him that I would stay awhile.

"Always, Dorr; I want you with me. I remember, now, I asked you long ago to come. I am rich, my boy; I've got money, and plantations, and slaves; but I haven't any friends. Well, who would I be kind to, if it wasn't to Amos Jewett and his little son, Dorr? I was my chum; he'd wrestle with me and throw me; he'd beat right any boy that tried to put upon me. I want somebody to talk to; my girl can't always be with me. Le Fevre is a good fellow, but he's never happy unless he's driving the niggers round. He shall show you the plantation when you're rested—to-morrow—yes, that will be the evening, when you want to go to New Orleans, he shall go with you; I never stir off the place. You'll see how the cane grows—the old cane and the new cane. Le Fevre says he's got more than a hundred acres now planted. He'll show you the sugar mill, and maybe he can figure up what the crop will be this year. Good black soil, this, Dorr. This is better than planting corn in the cracks of the rocks up north, eh? No, you won't talk about going away, Dorr Jewett."

So he rambled on a wreck of mind as well as body, continually striving to struggle out of the gloom in which he was involved, and to reach back toward his family and home.

A burst of melody shook the air; a clear, pure, sweet, singing, a merry French song. Mr. Bostock raised his head, and a new intelligence gave momentary lustre to his eyes.

"Ah, that's Coralie," he said. "You shall see Coralie. Here she comes."

He heard me, and the mist seemed dispelled from his brain; as by magic. A look of surprised intelligence came to his face.

"You Dorr Jewett?—little Dorr? Bless me, how you have grown! I'm not often glad to see anyone but my child, in these days; but I am glad to see you. Is your father well?"

"Why, he died, sir, more than a year ago. I wrote to you about it."

"I never read letters now—nor papers—nor books. Not now. Yet I do remember a nice letter you wrote me once, years ago, before."

The change that came over that woe-filled face terrified me. It was literally black with rage, with fury, called up by his own speech.

"Yes, sir," I hastened to say, "and you answered it so kindly."

"Did I? That is well; I am glad to hear it. So you've come to look up a wretched and lonely old man like me, have you, because I was kind to you? Do you know, my boy, I don't think there's another man in Louisiana, or out of it, could soften me the way you have. I'm going to have you stay here, now you've come. Oh, yes, I do remember now all about the time I went to Boston, and back among the hills where I was born, and how I found you and your poor Amos out in the fields, and ate your good mother's mush and milk."

His face seemed recreated. It actually was a gentle smile.

"But it was long ago, and life has been hard and cruel with me since, and I have forgotten all these pleasant things. Why, boy, it seems to me as if you'd come to me from another world."

He took my hand in his own thin hand.

"You'll stay with me, Dorr Jewett, won't you?"

I believe the tears came to my eyes at the question. It was asked in a voice which was the ghost of that hearty, resonant tone that had long sounded in my dreams. I told him that I would stay awhile.

"Always, Dorr; I want you with me. I remember, now, I asked you long ago to come. I am rich, my boy; I've got money, and plantations, and slaves; but I haven't any friends. Well, who would I be kind to, if it wasn't to Amos Jewett and his little son, Dorr? I was my chum; he'd wrestle with me and throw me; he'd beat right any boy that tried to put upon me. I want somebody to talk to; my girl can't always be with me. Le Fevre is a good fellow, but he's never happy unless he's driving the niggers round. He shall show you the plantation when you're rested—to-morrow—yes, that will be the evening, when you want to go to New Orleans, he shall go with you; I never stir off the place. You'll see how the cane grows—the old cane and the new cane. Le Fevre says he's got more than a hundred acres now planted. He'll show you the sugar mill, and maybe he can figure up what the crop will be this year. Good black soil, this, Dorr. This is better than planting corn in the cracks of the rocks up north, eh? No, you won't talk about going away, Dorr Jewett."

So he rambled on a wreck of mind as well as body, continually striving to struggle out of the gloom in which he was involved, and to reach back toward his family and home.

A burst of melody shook the air; a clear, pure, sweet, singing, a merry French song. Mr. Bostock raised his head, and a new intelligence gave momentary lustre to his eyes.

"Ah, that's Coralie," he said. "You shall see Coralie. Here she comes."

DOLEFUL DUN.

A Christmas Jeremiad from the Commercial Agency.

FRIDAY IS PAST STIRRING UP.

What Is Being Done Leaves No Margin for Profit Possibility of the Holiday Season. Foreign Trade Struggling.

New York, Dec. 28.—R. G. Don & Co.'s Weekly Review says:

The year is practically over, except the holiday season, which is remarkably well advanced as respects number of sales, considering the state of the market. The array of merchandise is materially diminished in volume, and the business is correspondingly less active. The holiday season is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

Speculation is largely confined to a few favorites, notably wheat, which has changed little in price, though western receipts have been good. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The failure of the Crane Co. at the end of last week, with some other smaller failures, has not had much effect upon the market. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active. The market for wheat is now well advanced, and the business is correspondingly less active.

TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

Old Ship-on-the-mount 'n' takes his cheer Out on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

Then he'd sit on the porch, as if the day was clear.

ers' kiss. Let the perfume of time swing slowly when young lovers meet in the electric touch of a kiss, in the poetry of melted glances, in the eloquent pressing of hands.

The train passed a familiar street whose long line of glimmering lights stretched as far as the sight could reach, affording a passing glimpse of a massive church, black and gloomy looking, towering into the night.

To the two young people who saw it from the window of the passing train it would always be a dear spot.

"Doesn't it look deserted, now?" she cried. "I wonder. They took all the pretty decorations away."

The train had proceeded haltingly at first, but now as it neared the suburbs it was dancing along at a fair speed. It shot past dark streets, running off into the dark; the gloom here and there was illuminated by the red lights of saloons and billiard halls. Sleepy looking policemen and watchmen stood at the corners.

It did not once occur to the happy young couple in the sleeper that the world was pursuing its daily round, just as if they had not been married at all. To them, everything seemed to have caught the spirit of the happiness they were experiencing. The lights blushed with a sympathetic glow, the train rumbled along musically. Even the passengers must feel that this was an extraordinary occasion. And the world outside that was reeling past the windows; here bristling with numbers and lights, and there running off into the darkness and gloom, seemed full of new life.

"Are you very happy, Mabel?" he asked.

"Very," she said, "and are you quite sure that you are as happy as if it had been Laura Deane instead of me?"

He laughed. "I never asked her to accept the honor," he said. "Perhaps she would not have appreciated it if I had. As it is, I am more than satisfied."

"Did you think she looked pretty to-night?" Mabel asked. "I suspected that she felt a pang of jealousy as she stood beside me. Wouldn't both of you have been glad if she had been in my place?" she asked teasingly.

"I do not suppose such thoughts are keeping her awake," Clarence said, "but I do fear that poor Jimmie Franklin's numbers are badly disturbed to-night, eh?"

"Do you think so? I am sorry if it troubles him. I only hope that he is quite as happy as I am."

"I used to think you had a tenderness for Jimmie," he said. "It may have been jealousy in me."

"I never cared for anyone but you," she replied. "I didn't care a snap for a single one of the gentlemen who paid me attention. You were the only one, Clarence."

The lights of the city had vanished behind. The train was roaring along through the night. The gloomy world lay as yet; the locomotive dashed along like a great, restless monster on some monstrous errand. The semaphore signal and the operator's light at a wayside station flashed by the window.

With his arm about her, Clarence drew her head to his shoulder. To have her all his own for the rest of his life was just enough for him. Unconsciously, his mind ran ahead into the future; he saw themselves living happily together, loving each other none the less after the passage of years. Maturity had added sweeter charms to her. Through all the years to come she would listen for his footfall coming home and would meet him at the door with a smile and a kiss. His wife! His pulses throbbed delightfully at the thought.

Neither spoke. He was filled with blissful reveries. She, too, was weary, and her head drooped wearily upon his shoulder. No words were needed to give utterance to their happiness. It was enough to know that they were each other's and that they were together.

Only the monotonous murmur of the train broke the silence. The passengers had sought relief from weariness in slumbers and the only light that burned in the car was that hidden beneath the pink shade.

Rousing himself from the delightful train of thought into which he had fallen, he stooped to kiss her. The brown head was drooped so low upon his arm that the face was quite hidden from his gaze. She was perfectly still. Very tenderly he lifted her head until her eyes looked straight into his. A silvery tear glistened upon her lashes. The look she turned upon him was one he could not understand. They gazed mutely at each other for an instant, then his eyes dropped to her folded hands. While he was thinking of the future, she had slipped his watch from his pocket.

But it was not upon the dial that she had been gazing. While she had been resting so passively in his arms she was looking at the picture of a beautiful woman—not her picture—glued fast to the inside of the case.

He took the watch from her hand quickly, and his eyes fell before the look of earnest inquiry in hers. She did not speak.

"That—that picture," he stammered, "that's—that's, ah—that's a friend of my sister's."

The brown head dropped back upon his shoulder. She was sobbing half tearfully. She refused to look up to him or speak.

"Oh, Clarence," she cried, "Why didn't you tell me?"

And this was the beginning of his married life.—R. L. Adamson, in Atlanta Constitution.

GREAT BEND, Kan., Dec. 28.—This city will not be behind her neighbors in looking after her poor this Christmas. A movement has been started which will no doubt send \$300 on a joyous mission to the homes of misfortune.

Private subscriptions to the amount of \$150 cash, also provisions have been raised. The musicians are preparing a concert for Wednesday evening, which will swell the fund. Great Bend lodge 137, A. O. U. W., achieved considerable distinction by dispensing with their annual banquet and instead contributing \$25 to the cause.

Health Inspection Law Riddled. LANSING, Mich., Dec. 28.—The Michigan health board has just been given a trip to the backseat by the supreme court. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.

The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit. The board had been preparing to inspect the health of the city of Detroit.



MY ATTENDANT BALANCED THE TRUNK ON HIS HEAD.

I went down to see him, an' I'm toting up every young man's trunk. He put down the burden, and not waiting for the silver piece that I wished to give him he made a quick movement in the direction of the fields. The overseer abruptly withdrew.

The man who was seated had his back to me, but by the looks of the overseer he must have known that there was somebody beside the trunk.

He rose and turned round. It was a thin, bent figure, in a flowered dressing-gown and slippers. His hair presented that singular appearance caused by turning white in patches and streaks. His face was hollow and wrinkled; his eyes were lusterless.

With the most apathetic expression he looked at me, and seemed to think that my appearance did not call for question or remark. At least he made none.

"Beg your pardon, sir," I said. "Is Mr. Pierce Bostock at home? Can I see him?"

"The overseer attends to all business," he said, peevishly. "Go to him; there he goes."

"I have no business that he can attend to. I must see Mr. Bostock personally."

"Must you, indeed?" He began to rouse a little at the word, and show irritation. "Where do you come from, anyway, young man, that you think a La Fourche planter can be made to attend to person at the back and call of every intruder who fancies he has business with him? What?"

His own talk, delivered in a feeble, broken voice, excited him and brought on a fit of coughing. He stamped with vexation, and sat down on a bamboo settee through sheer weakness.

I am Pierce Bostock," he said, when he could find voice again. "What the devil do you want?"

I ought to have expected this announcement, and to have been prepared for it; but I felt very much at that instant as though I had been following a chimera. To be exact, I felt cold and sick, and the hopes of long years vanished as a puff of smoke. And yet it seemed